



H.R. 1657 – To establish a Science and Technology Scholarship Program to award scholarships to recruit and prepare students for careers in the National Weather Service and in National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration marine research, atmospheric research, and satellite programs.

Floor Situation

H.R. 1657 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) on March 22, 2007. It was referred to the House Committee on Science and Technology, but never considered.

H.R. 1657 is expected to be considered on the floor on September 17, 2007.

Background

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is a federal agency within the Department of Commerce that focuses on the condition of the oceans and the atmosphere. Its mission is "To understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment and conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet our nation's economic, social and environmental needs."

Summary

H.R. 1657 would create a merit-based scholarship program administered by the NOAA to promote careers in the National Weather Service and in the NOAA marine and atmospheric research programs. Only individuals who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment as full-time students in appropriate science and technology fields are eligible. The scholarships are available for up to four years. The Administrator of the NOAA determines the acceptable fields of study and scholarship amounts.

After receiving the degree, scholarship recipients are required to work at the NOAA for 24 months for each academic year they received a scholarship. This period of service must begin within 60 days of graduation, except under certain circumstance outlined by the Administrator, in which a deferral may be granted.

The bill requires that students who withdraw from the program, fail to meet certain academic standards, or are dismissed by the school for disciplinary reasons to repay the scholarship to the Federal government. An exception is included for student death or extreme hardship.

Cost

There is currently no Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate for H.R. 1674.

Note: The CBO, however, did score similar legislation, H.R. 2364, during the 109th Congress. It is estimated that implementing the scholarship program contained in H.R. 2364 would cost NOAA about \$500,000 annually. However, it would have no impact on direct spending or revenues because the bill contains no new budget authority, credit authority, or changes in revenues or tax expenditures.

Staff Contact

For questions or further information contact Shea Loper at (202) 226-2302.